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SAFFRON WALDEN

IN THE

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF ESSEX

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THE

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year

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PREFACE

To the Mayor and Members of the Saffron Walden Borough Council.

I have the honour to submit the Annual Report for the year 1949. This is my twenty-eighth Annual Report for the Borough, and some impression of the changes shown in the statistical records over that period may be gained by reference to the following comparative figures:—

	1922	*1949*
Estimated population	5,860	6,980
Number of inhabited houses	1,555	2,205
According to Rate Books—		
Rateable Value	£27,983	£42,572
Death Rate per 1,000 population ...	16.5	12.7
Birth Rate per 1,000 population ...	14.8	15.6
Death Rate of Infants under one year of age per 1,000 live births	68	18.3

In the past, census returns have shown that the average age of the population of the Borough was always relatively high. Twenty years ago the number of persons of pensionable age was 788; it is probable that the number now exceeds 1,000

An important step in the development of the new National Health Service is the recent publication of an authoritative Guide to the services provided by the East Anglian and North-East Metropolitan Regional Hospital Boards, as well as the various health services of the County and matters relating to the general practitioner services.

The Handbook gives a very complete account of the services available and of the action necessary to obtain assistance. And it is made clear that any further explanation desired may be obtained from the Health Department, County Hall, Chelmsford, or from the Area Medical Officer, 195 Springfield Road, Chelmsford, telephone Chelmsford 4891, 4892, 4893 and 4894.

It is to be hoped that this official Guide will be widely circulated.

S. R. RICHARDSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

Area: 7,502 Acres.

Population (Registrar General's estimate of resident population 1949): 6,980.

Number of inhabited houses (end of 1949) according to Rate Books: 2,205.

Rateable value: £42,572.

Sum represented by a penny rate: £167.

Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year (corrections being made for inward and outward transfers:—

		Total	Male	Female	
Live Births	Legitimate ...	103	60	43	Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated population 15.6
	Illegitimate ...	6	4	2	
Still Births	Legitimate ...	1	0	1	
	Illegitimate ...	0	0	0	
Deaths		89	33	56	Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated population 12.7

Deaths from puerperal causes:—

From puerperal sepsis, 0.

From other puerperal causes, 0.

Total, 0.

Deaths of infants under one year of age: Legitimate 2, Illegitimate 0 — Total, 2

Death Rate of infants under one year of age:—

All infants per 1,000 live births, 18.3.

DEATHS from Measles (all ages), 0.

,, ,, Whooping Cough (all ages), 0.

,, ,, Diarrhoea (under two years), 0.

There was no excessive mortality from any particular disease during the year.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES

Laboratory Service.—Bacteriological Service: Arrangements have now been made for the district to be served by the Public Health Laboratory, Tennis Court Road, Cambridge.

Ambulance Facilities.—A day and night ambulance service is provided by the Local Health Authority. The ambulance station is at Saffron Walden and is on the telephone, but as the driver and attendant may be away from the station answering a call, persons requiring an ambulance are advised to dial "999" or "0" or "01" (according to arrangements in the area), and ask for an ambulance. Where there is no dialling system it is sufficient to lift the receiver and ask for an ambulance.

Non-emergency calls are only accepted from a hospital, a doctor or nurse, or other competent person such as an authorised officer in the Mental Health Service.

Water.—There were no extensions of water mains during the year. The water has continued to be of the highest standard of organic and bacterial purity. All dwelling houses in the town are supplied from the public water mains. The number depending on stand pipes is 365.

The supply has been consistently satisfactory in both quality and quantity, and has never shown any evidence of contamination. The following is a copy of the most recent chemical analysis of a sample of the water going into supply:—

CHEMICAL RESULTS IN PARTS PER MILLION

APPEARANCE: Bright with a slight deposit consisting of minute chalk particles.

Colour (Hazen)	Nil	*Odour*	Nil
Reaction pH.	7.1	*Free Carbon Dioxide* ...	53
Electric Conductivity at 20°C.	610	*Total Solids, dried at* 180°C.	410
Chlorine in Chlorides ...	18	*Alkalinity as Calcium Carbonate*	285
Hardness; Total	200	*Non-carbonate (Permanent)*	0
Carbonate (Temporary)	200	*Nitrogen in Nitrates* ...	Absent
Nitrogen in Nitrates ...	4.6	*Oxygen absorbed in 4 hrs. at* 27°C.	0.00
Free Ammonia	0.000	*Residual Chlorine* ...	Absent
Albuminoid Ammonia ...	0.000	Other metals	Absent
Metals: Iron	0.04		
Turbidity (Silica Scale) Less than	5		

Drainage and Sewerage.—In view of the fact that the proposed new Disposal Works could not be in operation for some years, the Council adopted the Borough Engineer's recommendations for maintaining the old works in reasonable condition during this period. These repairs and alterations have since been completed. They include a new pump for emptying the settling and humus tanks, and the provision of irrigating channels for the even distribution of effluent on the rectangular beds, which now act as strainers for removing a proportion of suspended matter before the effluent reaches the circular filters. Already, very good results have been obtained. A recent report on a sample of effluent taken at the outfall indicated that although it was not yet considered an entirely satisfactory effluent its impurity figure now complies with the prescribed County standard.

Baths.—The installation of Filtration and Chlorination Plants has given very satisfactory results. Analysis of a sample of the bath water taken after normal use showed that the water was of satisfactory organic quality and of a high standard of bacterial purity.

An automatic soda doser has recently been added for the purpose of maintaining alkalinity.

Housing.—Satisfactory progress was made on the Council's building programme, and 103 permanent houses were erected during the year. The number erected by private enterprise was 10.

In selecting tenants for the new houses the "point" system was used.

Hospitals.—For all hospital and tuberculosis services the two Saffron Walden Districts are included in the East Anglian Regional Hospital Area, and the three hospitals situated at Saffron Walden are administered by the Cambridge and Newmarket Hospital Management Committee.

The rest of the Administrative County of Essex is in the North-East Metropolitan Regional Hospital Area.

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASES

INFECTIOUS DISEASES (other than Tuberculosis)

Scarlet Fever	10
Measles	8
Whooping Cough	6
Cerebro Spinal Fever	1
Poliomyelitis	3

TUBERCULOSIS

Notification.—One case of pulmonary tuberculosis (aged 42) and one case of non-pulmonary tuberculosis (aged 9) were notified.

Deaths.—The death of one man (aged 47) was attributed to pulmonary tuberculosis.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Milk Supply.—On the 1st October, the Food and Drugs (Milk and Dairies) Act, 1944, came into operation. The Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949, also came into operation on that date.

Under the 1944 Act the Ministry of Agriculture became responsible for supervising the production of milk, the registration and inspection of dairy farms and the issue of producers' licences. Local Authorities now control distribution and are responsible for the registration of milk distributors. They also retain certain duties relating to the supervision of water supplies of dairy farms, under the Public Health Act, 1936.

The Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949, give extended powers for the protection of milk against contamination and infection during its production and distribution. A County Advisory Committee, on which Local Authorities are represented, will supervise the administration of these Regulations.

Other Regulations which came into operation on the 1st October are: The Milk (Special Designation) (Pasteurised and Sterilised Milk) Regulations, and the Milk (Special Designation) (Raw Milk) Regulations.

While the Ministry of Agriculture are responsible for the issue of producers' licences, Local Authorities issue dealers' licences and supplementary licences. County Councils issue licences in respect of pasteurisation plants. All fees for licences are abolished.

Under the new Regulations Local Authorities have power to stop a milk supply where there is evidence that the milk may be a source of infection with any disease communicable to man.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA

The Sanitary Inspector presents the following Report on the Inspection of the area during the year:—

Total number of Inspections	1,702
Nuisances or Defects found	558
Complaints received	221
Informal (written) Notices	201
Statutory Notices served	0
Nuisances and Defects remedied	560
Houses Inspected	95
Houses Re-inspected	15
Premises disinfected	33
Schools disinfected	3
Inspection of 2 Government Controlled Slaughterhouses ...	698
Inspection of Bakehouses	21
Inspection of Dairies ond Cowsheds	5
Cases of overcrowding abated	15
Samples of Water	5
Samples of Trade Waste	1
Samples of Sewage Effluent	0

Unsound Food

Food in Tins, Jars, Bottles or Packets	1,013 Containers
Meat	27½ lbs.
Whale Meat Loaf	6½ lbs.
Sausages	39 lbs.
Bacon	50 lbs.
Gelatine	4 lbs.
Meat Pie	9 lbs.
Suet	½ lb.
Fish	18 lbs.
Cheese	35¼ lbs.
Various Oats	43 lbs.
Dates	56 lbs.
Flour	3 lbs.
Savouries	63

The greater part of the foodstuffs condemned were handed over for Animal Food and a small quantity destroyed.

FOOD HANDED OVER FOR MANURE PURPOSES

Fish	51	Stone

FOOD RETURNED TO VENDORS

Ketchup	180	Bottles
Cheese	25	lbs.
Pork	$1\frac{3}{4}$	lbs.

HOUSING STATISTICS

Number of new houses erected during the year:—

(a) By Local Authorities	50
(b) By other bodies or persons	6

Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year:—

Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	95
Number of inspections made for the purpose	127
Number of houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ...	2
Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	7

Remedy of Defects following Informal Notices:—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of action by the Local Authority—houses closed	2

Housing Act, 1936. *Part* 4. *Overcrowding:—*

1.	Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	17
	Number of families dwelling therein	26
	Number of persons dwelling therein	122
2.	Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	12
3.	Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	15
	Number of persons concerned in such cases	73

Rat Destruction.—The Operator paid 103 visits to Council property, 2,621 visits to private property, and 63 visits to business premises. Dead rats collected, 599. The Slade and public sewers had several treatments.

Eradication of Bed Bugs.—Nine houses were found to be infested with bed bugs.

Meat.—There are two Government Controlled Slaughter-houses in the district. The number of inspections made by the Inspector during the year, and including visits at the time of slaughter, was 698.

CARCASES INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED

	Cattle	Calves	Sheep	Pigs
Number inspected	911	362	2160	544
All diseases except Tuberculosis—				
Whole carcases condemned ...	2	1	8	15
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	333	12	62	90
Percentage of number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis	34·35	3·59	3·24	19·32
Tuberculosis only—				
Whole carcases condemned ...	12	0	0	3
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	103	3	0	7
Percentage of number inspected affected with Tuberculosis ...	12.51	.82	0	1.83

Condemned—

Meat	12,365 lbs.
Offals	9,325 lbs.

ADULTERATION, ETC.

Ice Cream.—17 persons are registered under the Essex County Council Act, 1933, for the sale of ice cream.

1.—Inspection of Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

Including inspections made by the Sanitary Inspectors or Inspectors of Nuisances

Premises (1)	Number of Inspections (2)	Written Notices (3)	Occupiers prosecuted (4)
54 Factories ... ... (Including Factory Laundries)	34	19	—
Workshops ... ... (Including Workshop Laundries)	12	—	—
Workplaces	15	—	—
Total	61	19	Nil

2.—Defects Found in Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

Particulars (1)	Number of Defects: Found (2)	Remedied (3)	Referred to H.M. Inspector (4)	
Nuisances under the Public Health Acts—				
Want of cleanliness	10	10	—	—
Want of ventilation	2	2	—	—
Overcrowding	—	—	—	—
Want of drainage of floors	4	4	—	—
Other nuisances	3	3	—	—
Sanitary Accommodations				
Insufficient	3	3	—	—
Unsuitable or defective	11	11	—	—
Not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—
Offences under the Factory and Workshop Acts—				
Illegal occupation of underground bakehouse (s. 101)	—	—	—	—
Other offences ... ... **(Excluding offences relating to outwork and offences under the Sections mentioned in the Schedule to the Ministry of Health (Factories and Workshops Transfer of Powers) Order, 1921)**	—	—	—	—
Total	30	30	—	—

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